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Dr. Paul S. Feinstein
Assistant Program Director
Foreign Science Information
National Science Foundation
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Dr. Feinstein:

The proposal for the translation and dissemination of Soviet geographical literature as outlined by the American Geographical Society is most interesting and I am glad to offer comments regarding it.

Members of the geographical profession in the United States recognize a distinct need for a program of this nature. As far as I know there is, presently, no such program concentrating on Soviet geographical literature and there is a considerable body of such literature which should be exploited both in the interest of United States geographers studying the U.S.S.R. and others engaged in research on the U.S.S.R.

It should be emphasized that the degree of value of the project will depend on the selection of material to be translated, and the quality of the translation. While the proposal does not spell out in detail the type of material which is to be translated, it would seem that the greatest value would be obtained by concentrating on scientific discovery, new theories, and methodological studies and de-emphasizing regional geographic descriptions (except where they serve to illustrate the application of some new methodology). It is also worth noting that there are few geographers in this country in a position or with the advanced language capability to perform the selection process on a continuing basis with anywhere near the efficiency that a staff specifically created for this purpose would attain.

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Professional evaluation indicates that the Shabad-Ecker team is an excellent choice for such a translation project. Dr. Ecker has produced a glossary of Russian physical geographical terms which has proven to be an extremely useful and reliable reference aid for anyone who is doing research with Soviet geographical materials. Mr. Shabad has demonstrated his competence and initiative in his work on the Columbia-Lippincott gazetteer and in producing his book on the geography of the U.S.S.R.

The budgeting of one cartographer for only one month is perhaps open to question. Unless the maps appearing in the translated materials are of a quality suitable for re-photography, additional cartographic support would seem desirable. Geographic publications usually are accompanied by maps which are an integral part of the whole and it would seem unfortunate if maps were left out or poorly reproduced due to a lack of cartographic capability for reworking or simplifying them to make them more useful.

The budget specifies black and white map reproduction but it doesn't specify the reproduction of photographs which might appear in some of the materials to be translated. This budget item might be clarified to provide for the reproduction of photographs. Other estimated costs of reproduction seem on the high side, but undoubtedly factors we are not aware of enter into the picture.

The subscription price listed is certainly nominal. It is assumed that this program, if adopted, will be continued as long as there is a demonstrated need for it and support is obtained.

As you know, there are other translation programs under way which handle Russian language materials. These do not now meet the requirements that would be met by the proposed program since they do not concentrate on Russian geographic materials. However, some translated Russian geographic materials are made available through the other programs, and I would suggest coordination of the proposed program with existing ones to avoid any unnecessary duplication of activity. The National Science Foundation is familiar with these existing programs and can, I am sure, provide for the accomplishment of such coordination.

Sincerely,

/s/

Otto E. Guthe
Assistant Director

CONCURRENCE: [signed carbon draft]
Chief, FDD/OO

Date

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